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Recognitional Identification and the Knowledge Argument

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Frank Jackson's famous Knowledge Argument moves from the premise that complete physical knowledge about experiences is not complete knowledge about experiences to the falsity of physicalism. Some physicalists (e.g., John Perry) have countered by arguing that what Jackson's Mary, the perfect scientist who acquires all physical knowledge about experiencing red while being locked in a monochromatic room, lacks before experiencing red is merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity, and that since lacking a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity does not entail lacking any pieces of knowledge of worldly facts, physicalism is safe. I will argue that what Mary lacks in her room is not merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity and that some physicalists have failed to see this because of a failure to appreciate that Mary's epistemic progress when she first experiences red has two different stages. While the second epistemic stage can perhaps be plausibly considered as acquiring merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity, there is good reason to think that the first epistemic stage cannot be thus considered.

Keywords: The knowledge argument, Frank Jackson, John Perry, the phenomenal concept strategy.

1. The Recognitional Strategy

Jackson's (1982) *Knowledge Argument* is one of the most intuitively compelling arguments against physicalism (roughly, the thesis that our world is entirely physical). This famous argument moves from the premise that complete physical knowledge about experiences is not complete knowledge about experiences to the falsity of physicalism. Consider Mary, a perfect scientist who has all the physical knowledge about experiencing red and yet who has not experienced red before. The intuition is that when Mary leaves her room and sees a ripe to-

mato, she will be surprised and exclaim “So, *this* is what it is like to see red!”, and will thus acquire a new piece of information about experiencing red. And, since physicalism implies that given her complete physical knowledge, Mary knows everything about experiences of red, Jackson argues, physicalism is false.

Some physicalists have countered this argument by arguing that what Mary lacks before experiencing red is merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity, and that since lacking a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity is not, or does not entail, lacking any pieces of knowledge about worldly (coarse-grained) facts,¹ physicalism is safe. Let us call this reply to the Knowledge Argument “the Recognitional Strategy” (briefly, RS). RS finds one of its clearest and most systematic expressions in John Perry’s admirable *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness* (2001); and, the account offered there will be the main focus of this paper, though the lessons that will be drawn throughout will be general.

An instructive way to get a better idea of RS is to appeal to an analogy. Consider the following case from Perry (2001: 119). Perry might know that Fred Dretske wrote *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (KFI) even if he does not know that *that* (man) [perceptually demonstrating Dretske at a party] wrote KFI. In this case, Perry fails to recognize (and hence lacks the recognitional knowledge) that *that* is Dretske. If Perry had known that *that* is Dretske, he would have inferred that *that* (man) wrote KFI from his previous knowledge that Dretske wrote KFI. However, lacking this piece of knowledge (i.e., that *that* (man) is Dretske) is not, or does not entail, lacking any piece of knowledge about worldly facts because Perry already has certain pieces of knowledge that have the same worldly content as that piece of knowledge (e.g., that Dretske is Dretske). (Similarly, Perry’s coming to know “*that* is Dretske” is merely a matter of coming to recognize an identity and cannot thus be thought of as coming to possess any piece of knowledge about a new worldly fact.) It seems that if the Knowledge Argument had a valid form, then Perry’s failing to know that *that* (man) is Dretske would entail that *that* (man) is different from Dretske while, *ex hypothesi*, they are the same.

RS claims that Mary’s entire new knowledge can be expressed by “*this* is what it is like to see red” and also that this piece of knowledge is the same in kind as the piece of knowledge Perry comes to possess

¹ It is commonplace to distinguish two different ways of individuating facts. *Fine-grained* facts are individuated in terms of the concepts the subject has of the things in the world; *coarse-grained* facts are individuated in a way insensitive to those concepts. So, the fact that there is a bottle of water in my backpack and the fact that there is a bottle of H₂O in my backpack are two different facts if “fact” is understood in a fine-grained way (since a subject can believe the former without believing the latter), but are the same fact if it is understood in a coarse-grained way (since water is H₂O). When I speak of “worldly facts” or “facts,” what I mean is always coarse-grained facts.

when he learns that that is Dretske. "This [Mary's] new knowledge is", Perry writes, "a case of recognitional or identificational knowledge, as in the case with my knowledge at the party with Dretske" (2001: 147). According to RS, Mary's coming to know "*that* is what it is like to see red" is merely a matter of coming to recognize an identity and cannot thus be thought of as coming to possess any piece of knowledge about a worldly fact. Through experiencing red, Mary acquires, RS claims, a new *recognitional* concept (i.e., the one she expresses by "*that*") of the experience of seeing red she already knew under a physical/functional concept in her room; and, accordingly, the new bit of propositional knowledge she expresses by exclaiming "*that* is what it is like to see red!" is, it is claimed, merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity.²

To make clearer the purported analogy between Jackson's Mary case and Perry's Dretske case, let us suppose, as Perry (2001: 99) does, that the texts Mary reads in her room have systematically named the subjective characters (what-it-is-likenesses) of color experiences and that Q_R is defined in one of those texts as the subjective character of experiencing red. So, suppose that Mary knows, *before* leaving her room, that Q_R is what it is like to see red, while she does not know what it is like to have an experience with the subjective character Q_R because she did not have an experience with Q_R . This bit of knowledge is analogous to Perry's first piece of knowledge about Dretske (i.e., "Dretske wrote KFI") in that just as the latter is "detached from my [Perry's] perception of him [Dretske]" (Perry 2001: 119), the former is detached from "an act of attending to a subjective character" (Perry 2001: 147). Upon seeing the ripe tomato, Mary comes to know that *this* is what it is like to see red, and this is analogous to Perry's coming to know, after Dretske introduces himself, that *that* is Dretske. The latter is attached to a perception of Dretske and the former to an act of attending to a certain subjective character. And, finally, combined with her previous knowledge, Mary infers that Q_R is *this*, where *this* picks out the red experience-type, just as Perry infers from his first and second bits of knowledge that *that* (man) wrote KFI.

According to Perry, the problem Mary's case poses for physicalism is best seen as an instance of the sort of problem Frege called to our attention: how can identities be informative? Now, there are (at least *prima facie*) good reasons to think that recognition of an identity does not require coming to possess any piece of knowledge of new worldly

² Loar also compares Mary's lack of the relevant piece of knowledge with ordinary recognitional failures: "Margot learns about the element Au and reads that people decorate themselves with alloys of Au. But she has never seen gold and cannot visually identify it: she lacks an adequate visual conception. She later is shown some gold and forms a visual conception of it, 'that stuff,' and she acquires a new piece of information...to the effect that those previously read about embellishments are made of that stuff. [I]f the knowledge argument were unrestrictedly valid, it would follow that that stuff is not identical to Au" (2004: 223).

facts (and that failure to recognize an identity does not entail failing to possess any piece of knowledge of new worldly facts). When Perry fails to recognize that that [demonstrating Dretske] is Dretske, he does not thereby fail to know about a worldly fact; and, accordingly, if he recognizes that that is Dretske, he does not thereby come to know about a new worldly fact. This is again because that that is Dretske is the same worldly fact as that Dretske is Dretske, and the latter is something Perry already knows about. The basic idea here is simply that worldly facts can be represented (or conceived) in many different ways and, in order for a subject to know about a certain worldly fact, it is not necessary that she has access to all those different ways of representing (or conceiving) it. New knowledge does not necessarily involve knowledge of new facts.³

In what follows, I will simply grant for the sake of argument that failure to recognize an identity does not entail failing to possess any piece of knowledge of new worldly facts. I will argue against RS that what Mary lacks in her room is *not* merely a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity and also that some physicalists have failed to see this because of a failure to appreciate that Mary's entire epistemic progress when she first experiences red has two different stages: while the second stage of her epistemic progress can be plausibly considered as acquiring a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity, there is good reason to think that the first epistemic stage cannot be thus considered.⁴

This paper is hereafter divided into three sections. In section 2, I will briefly describe Nida-Rümelin's (2004) Marianna case and contrast it with Mary's case to show that there are indeed two different epistemic stages in question—the one that is shared by Mary and Marianna and the one that is had only by Mary. In section 3, I will argue that, contra Nida-Rümelin, Marianna's epistemic progress is *propositional* and also that there are indeed *two* knowledge arguments, rather than one,

³ How should we understand the epistemic progress that Perry makes when he recognizes the identity in question? I take it for granted that an adequacy constraint on such an account is that it does not postulate or entail that the fact that Jameson is Jameson is different from the fact that *that* is Jameson. As is well-known, Frege's own solution to the problem of the cognitive significance of (some) recognitions of identities was to introduce "modes of presentation" but not to postulate further worldly facts: "Now if we were to regard equality [or identity] as a relation between that which the names 'a' and 'b' designate, it would seem that $a = b$ could not differ from $a = a$ (i.e. provided $a = b$ is true)...A difference [between $a = a$ and $a = b$] can arise only if the difference between the signs ['a' and 'b'] corresponds to a difference in the mode of presentation of that which is designated" (Frege 1993: 23–4).

⁴ I do not claim any originality in arguing for the existence of two different epistemic stages (see Nida-Rümelin (2004)) or in holding that the first epistemic stage is not a matter of acquiring a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity (see Stalnaker (2008)). The present essay aims to contribute to the literature by providing a clear account of the *nature* of the two epistemic stages and an answer to the question of *why* the first epistemic stage is not an acquisition of a piece of knowledge of an identity. See also fn. 19.

which can be distinguished with reference to the two items of knowledge that someone situated in a monochromatic environment lacks. In section 4, I will argue that Mary's extra epistemic progress *is*, while the epistemic progress shared by Mary and Marianna is *not*, a matter of recognizing an identity.

2. *Nida-Rümelin's Marianna*

Some misunderstandings regarding the nature and content of the new knowledge Mary gains after her release can be avoided by recognizing that there are different epistemic stages one might undergo in the process of obtaining information about experiences. When it comes to pointing out these differences, Nida-Rümelin's Marianna case (2004) is more helpful than Jackson's Mary. Like Mary, Marianna lives her entire life in a monochromatic environment. The central difference is, however, that when the happy day comes, rather than seeing ripe tomatoes and bananas and grass and the sky, she is randomly visually presented with four slides showing clear cases of blue, red, green and yellow but she is not told the names of the colors. Now Marianna does not know which of the four types of color experiences she has is, say, red nor does she know that having red experiences⁵ is like *that*, where the indexical in question picks out the type of experience she has when presented with the red slide.⁶ But still one can plausibly say that now that she has the experience of red, there is a clear sense in which she knows what it is like to see red.

One may object that there is a sense in which Marianna does not know what it is like to see red because she cannot identify red experiences *as* red experiences and knowing what it is like to see red requires such a recognitional ability: when she experiences the red slide, she is not in a position to recognize that she experiences red and justifiably verbally report "that is red." Does this mean that she does not know, in any epistemically respectable sense of the term, what it is like to see red? No, it only suggests that I should specify more carefully what I mean when I claim that after her red experience, Marianna knows what it is like to see red. What I mean is this: Marianna knows what it is like to have *this*, where *this* picks out the red experience-type. Marianna's gaining this piece of information is analogous to the case

⁵ I take it as a plausible hypothesis that the sense in which experiences are red is not the sense in which physical objects are red. So, phenomenal redness is different from physical redness (see Chalmers (2004)). At this point, one may follow Peacocke (1983: 21) and introduce a primed predicate (e.g., red') to pick out the phenomenal property of the visual experience that is normally produced by the presence of a red object. For convenience, I will not adopt this line and simply use unprimed predicates to characterize the experiences in question.

⁶ For an account of how demonstrative terms can refer to types rather than tokens, see Levine (2010). For further discussion about how type-demonstratives bear on the Knowledge Argument, see Demircioglu (2012), Levin (2007), Loar (2004), and Perry (2001).

in which Perry has a little chat with Dretske at a party without recognizing him as Dretske and hence without knowing that, referring to him, that is Dretske. There is a sense in which Perry knows the man he meets even if he lacks the recognitional knowledge that, pointing at the person he meets, that is Dretske.

Marianna's case shows that there is an intermediate epistemic stage which goes unnoticed in Mary's case.⁷ It seems intuitively plausible that Marianna learns something new when she is haphazardly shown different colors and hence she makes a sort of epistemic progress. However, she still misses the information that *this* is what it is like to see red, where *this* picks out the type of experience she has when she is presented with the red slide. There is still room for Marianna to make further epistemic progress because she experiences red without knowing that what she experiences is red.

3. *Two Knowledge Arguments*

An interesting question about Marianna's case is whether the epistemic progress she makes gives her the relevant item of knowledge which is crucial for the Knowledge Argument to work. After having the relevant visual experiences, Marianna evidently gains epistemic access to various new thought contents that are not available to her before. She is now in a position, for instance, to wonder whether ripe apples appear like *that* or *that*, where the indexicals respectively refer to the colors of the red and blue slides, and to entertain new hypotheses and make new guesses. What explains the fact that Marianna gains epistemic access to new thought contents is that she now knows what it is like to see red, blue, etc. Can an argument analogous to the original Knowledge Argument from Mary's case work in Marianna's case? Or does the property dualist need a further step of epistemic progress to make a viable case for the intended metaphysical conclusion—the falsity of physicalism?

Despite her new ability to entertain the corresponding thought, Marianna does not come to know that ripe apples appear like the red slide she has the experience of. Nevertheless, does she acquire any item of propositional knowledge? Through her color experiences, she knows what it is like to see red; but it is not clear whether this piece of knowledge raises any threat to physicalism because it is not clear that this knowledge has any propositional content, which can be expressed in propositional form by a suitable that-clause.⁸ According to

⁷ As Nida-Rümelin writes: "A disadvantage of Jackson's example is that it fails to distinguish two steps of epistemic progress that can be distinguished clearly in Marianna's case" (2004: 254). However, as will become clear, I do not agree with Nida-Rümelin's construal of the first epistemic stage of Mary's progress.

⁸ The assumption here is that the kind of knowledge that is relevant to the Knowledge Argument is propositional, that is, that the Knowledge Argument purports to pose a threat against physicalism only if the kind of knowledge that is acquired through experiencing red is propositional. This assumption is supported by the idea that

Nida-Rümelin, Marianna “has not gained any new item of the relevant propositional knowledge” (2004: 254) and hence there is nothing imperiling physicalism at this stage of her epistemic progress. After all, one may ask what form the relevant proposition can possibly be given since she does not know *that that is what it is like to see red*, where *that* picks out the relevant type of color experience.

However, contra Nida-Rümelin, the following construal of Marianna’s knowledge regarding what it is like to see red appears plausible:

(P) Marianna knows that it is like *Q* to have *this* (where *this* picks out the red experience-type).⁹

After being shown the red slide, Marianna acquires a new phenomenal concept, which is *Q*, that picks out the phenomenal quality (or subjective character) instantiated by experiencing red in a way different in kind from the concepts she had before.¹⁰ It is controversial whether there really are phenomenal concepts that satisfy the characteristics they are thought to have (e.g., conceptual independence from physical/functional concepts or having their referents in their modes of presentation (Loar 2004)); but, for the purposes of this paper, their existence can be harmlessly taken for granted because the explanation the proponents of the recognitional reply to the Knowledge Argument give for the epistemic progress in question rests essentially on their attributing to the subject the acquisition of those concepts.¹¹

physicalism is the thesis that every fact is a physical fact and propositional knowledge is knowledge of facts. (It is widely assumed that if the bit of knowledge that Marianna acquires through seeing red is, for instance, merely a piece of knowing-how, then it is not problematic for physicalism (see Lewis (2004)) and hence it can be plausibly ignored for the purposes of the Knowledge Argument. So, showing that there is a certain epistemic stage that goes unnoticed in Mary’s case is not enough: one needs also to show that that epistemic stage is also propositional in character.)

⁹ See Lycan (1996: 93) for a proposal along the similar lines. I adopt (P) instead of, e.g., (R) Marianna knows that this experience is *Q* or (S) Marianna knows that *Q* is what it is like to have this experience or some other proposition, because (P) is what one gets if one follows the general recipe of transforming “know wh-...” constructions into “know that” constructions (see below). However, I will sometimes make use also of (R) or (S) when it is more convenient to do so. But nothing essential in my discussion hangs on this choice.

¹⁰ Chalmers (2010: 267–8) calls the concept *Q* a direct phenomenal concept (and the belief that it is like *Q* to have this experience a direct phenomenal belief). On Chalmers’ account, the concept *this* that Mary employs to pick out the red experience-type is a demonstrative concept under which that experience-type is conceived as the object of her demonstration. Since, on this account, conceiving an experience-type under a demonstrative concept is not thereby conceiving it as having a quality picked out by a direct phenomenal concept (in our case, *Q*), (P) turns out to be a substantive piece of knowledge that is neither a priori nor analytic. This section of the present paper is much indebted to Chalmers’ account.

¹¹ Chalmers (2002) makes a useful distinction between Type-A materialists and Type-B materialists. Type-B materialists argue, while Type-A materialists deny, that there is an epistemic gap between physical/functional truths and phenomenal truths (and, of course, they both deny that there is a corresponding ontological

How does Marianna come to entertain, through experiencing red, the proposition that it is like *Q* to have *this*, where *this* picks out the red experience-type? A natural suggestion is this. Marianna has a red experience when she is presented with the slide. She then attends to it and forms the phenomenal concept *Q* that picks out the red experience-type.¹² And, by predicating the concept *Q* of the very experience she has, she forms the belief that it is like *Q* to have *this*, demonstrating the red experience-type in question.

Thinking Marianna's new piece of knowledge in terms of (P) is supported by certain syntactic and semantic relations between the sentential constructions "S knows wh-..." and "S knows that-..." For instance, "Jack knows who Mary is" is true in virtue of Jack's knowing that Mary is so-and-so, and "Susan knows where Hector is" is true in virtue of Susan's knowing that Hector is in such-and-such place. A plausible idea is that Marianna's knowledge can be viewed as a special case which can be assimilated to this general scheme: Marianna knows what it is like to see red in virtue of knowing that it is like *Q* to have *this*, demonstrating a red experience.¹³

I would like to make two points regarding the nature of the new piece of knowledge captured by (P). First, the new knowledge in question is not to be confused with the stipulative sort of knowledge Marianna might acquire upon getting acquainted with the phenomenal quality instantiated by experiencing red. Marianna might simply call the phenomenal quality she experiences '*Q*' and acquire the piece of knowledge expressed by the sentence "I name this quality '*Q*'." It is clear that

gap). Type-B materialists account for the existence of the alleged epistemic gap by reference to the special epistemic and semantic properties of phenomenal concepts. This is what is also known as "the Phenomenal Concept Strategy" (PCS) in the literature. The proponents of the recognitional reply to the Knowledge Argument are Type-B materialists in Chalmers' sense. Perry (2001) explicitly argues that the recognitional progress Mary makes through having red experiences is partly a matter of acquiring a new phenomenal concept of having red experiences. See also Tye (2000). I will specify how what I have to say about RS bears on PCS in general in the final section of the paper.

¹² Surely concept formation is a much more complex process than merely attending to the qualities in the subject's view. However such complexities need not concern us in this paper and the very rough account sketched above will suffice for our purposes.

¹³ Rosenthal writes: "Knowing 'wh' abstracts from the full content of one's knowledge; one knows *what* something is only if one knows *that* it's an F" (2004: 193). It is also worth noting that the locution "it is like" in (P) does not mean "it resembles" just as the locution "it is like" does not mean "it resembles" in the context of "what it is like to see red." Nagel writes: "[The] analogical form of the English expression "what it is *like*" is misleading. It does not mean "what (in our experience) it *resembles*," but rather 'how it is for the subject himself.'" (1974: 440, fn. 6). Reading "what it is like" as "what it resembles" is what Lewis (2004) calls "the first way to miss the point" of the Knowledge Argument among the six ways it specifies. The sense in which Marianna does not know what it is like to see red before she is presented with the red slide is the same as the sense in which she does not know, before she is presented with the red slide, that it is like *Q* to have *this*, demonstrating the experience-type in question.

the knowledge thus expressed does not pose any threat to physicalism. However, the new piece of knowledge expressed by the that-clause in (P) does not concern a “merely linguistic” fact but a worldly fact about her experience of seeing red. That piece of knowledge is acquired through predicating the novel concept *Q* of her experience and it is not relevantly different from the pieces of knowledge Marianna can acquire through predicating that concept to her subsequent experiences of seeing red. The fact that the token of the experience-type of seeing red through the having of which Marianna acquires the concept *Q* is the same as the token experience of which she predicates that concept should not obscure the point that the new knowledge she acquires does not concern a fact about her decision regarding the use of language but a fact about her experience.

Second, in order for (P) to pose a challenge to RS, it must be shown that the piece of knowledge that is expressed by the that-clause it contains is not knowledge of an identity (Recall that RS claims that the novel piece of knowledge acquired through seeing red is knowledge of an identity and as such does not threaten physicalism). In the next section, I will argue that the piece of knowledge captured by (P) is *not* knowledge of an identity. For the moment, however, I wish to argue that Chalmers’ construal of Perry’s account as an attempt “to analyze phenomenal knowledge as a sort of indexical knowledge” (2004: 184) obscures much of the point of RS. Chalmers argues that Perry thinks that the only sort of concept that can be acquired through experiencing is a demonstrative concept that functions to pick out whatever sort of experience one is currently attending to. According to Chalmers, there are also non-demonstrative “qualitative concepts of experiences” (2004: 185), which can be acquired through experiencing and are involved by the crucial new knowledge that the knowledge argument turns on. By a qualitative concept of an experience, Chalmers means the same sort of concept as *Q* involved by (P).¹⁴ Chalmers argues that Perry’s (or more generally RS’s) failure to recognize qualitative concepts such as *Q* results in his (or its) exclusive focus on “the relatively uninteresting indexical knowledge” (2004: 185) that *the experience usually caused by red things is this*, where *this* is a demonstrative concept of red experiences. For Chalmers, “the substantive, non-trivial” (2004: 185) knowledge that *the experience usually caused by red things is Q* (Chalmers’ candidate for the crucial new knowledge central to the knowledge argument) is simply neglected by Perry and RS.

There are a couple of points I would like to make on behalf of RS. First, RS need not and does not deny that there are qualitative concepts of experiences that can be acquired through experiencing. In his response to Chalmers, Perry emphatically puts it that Chalmers’ demonstrative concepts are “not my [his] candidate for Mary’s [new] concept” (2004: 219) and that “in thinking of the experience in this new way,

¹⁴ See fn. 10 above.

she is not thinking of it as ‘this experience’” (2004: 221). Accordingly, RS need not and does not deny that there are substantive (cognitively significant) pieces of knowledge that can be acquired through experiencing. According to RS, just as one’s coming to know, after Dretske introduces himself, that *that is Dretske*, involves a substantive piece of knowledge, what one might acquire through experiencing might similarly involve a substantive piece of knowledge. This is because new knowledge can be substantive without necessarily involving knowledge of new facts. Second, the central point of RS is that the crucial substantive piece of knowledge acquired through experiencing, the new knowledge involving qualitative concepts, is *knowledge of an identity* and as such does not pose any threat to physicalism. No purported objection to RS that does not explicitly counter this very point gets off the ground.

An interesting result appears to follow if (P) captures what Marianna comes to know after having red experiences. There are indeed two knowledge arguments, rather than one, which can be distinguished with reference to the two items of knowledge that someone situated in a monochromatic environment from birth appears to lack. First, such a person lacks the piece of knowledge expressed by the *that*-clause in (P): the knowledge that it is like Q to have this, where *this* picks out a red experience-type. The first Knowledge Argument runs roughly like this: One who knows everything physical there is to know may still lack the knowledge that it is like Q to have this, where *this* picks out a red experience-type, and hence physicalism is false. Second, she also lacks the knowledge that Q is what it is like to see red. The second Knowledge Argument goes roughly like this: One who knows everything physical there is to know may still lack the knowledge that Q is what it is like to see red, and hence physicalism is false.

Having the second piece of knowledge mentioned above implies having the first but not *vice versa*. Just like the first piece of knowledge, the second piece of knowledge intuitively requires having an experience of seeing red. But there is more to the second item of knowledge than what is required to have the first. Through her experience of the red slide, Marianna knows that it is like Q to have this, where *this* picks out the red experience-type, but does not know that Q is what it is like to see red; while through her experience of ripe tomatoes, Mary knows both. The difference between the two stems from the fact that unlike Mary, Marianna is not in a position to recognize her red experience-token *as* an instance of the red experience-type because such a recognition requires either having experiences of paradigmatically red objects like ripe tomatoes or being told by others that pointing at the red slide, *that is red*, or something to that effect.

A suggestive model which explains how Mary happens to recognize her experience of red as an experience of red goes like this: when Mary sees ripe tomatoes, she learns that it is like Q to have this, where *this* picks out the red experience-type. What is common to Mary and Marianna’s cases is this stage of epistemic progress. However, Mary also

knows that what she sees are ripe tomatoes (after all, she can tell by the way they look to her), and combined with her knowledge that her perceptual apparatus works normally and ripe tomatoes induce red experiences in normal perceivers, she infers that *this* is an experience of red.¹⁵ Hence, she gains an item of knowledge which Marianna lacks.

The fact that the item of knowledge that Mary and Marianna both acquire upon experiencing red is propositional is important because that means that that item of knowledge, as I have argued, can be properly deployed in a knowledge argument against physicalism. Hence if RS fails to account for that item of knowledge then it cannot be considered as a tenable physicalist reply to that argument. In the following section, I will argue that the first epistemic stage that Mary and Marianna both go through is not, or does not consist in, recognition of an identity and hence RS cannot account for the item of knowledge acquired at that stage.

4. *The Nature of the Two Epistemic Stages*

Before addressing the question of whether the first epistemic stage consists in recognition of an identity, the question I want to raise is this: what exactly is it that Mary knows in addition to what she and Marianna both know about the experience of red? How substantive is the *extra* epistemic progress Mary makes, that is, does she come to know a new fact about the world Marianna does not know? I think these are the questions RS can be properly interpreted as addressing. Let us consider the following more closely:

- (1) Q is what it is like to have this experience.
- (2) Q_R is what it is like to see red.

(1) is uttered by Marianna when she is shown the red slide. And, suppose that she also knows (2) when she is in her room: she knows that there is something it is like to see red, and her textbooks call it ' Q_R '.¹⁶ What she does not know is:

¹⁵ One may argue that Mary's knowledge is non-inferential because she does not go through any conscious inferential process in her mind. I am inclined to reply that there are unconscious inferences as well as conscious ones and Mary's inference can be the former if not the latter. Nothing much hangs on this, however. What is important is that there are different stages of epistemic progress in the cases specified and we need an account which explains how one passes from one stage to another.

¹⁶ One may question whether we can reasonably build the assumption that Mary learns about the subjective character of seeing red, Q_R , into our formulation of the knowledge argument. Rosenthal writes: "Unless we've established independently that Q_R is itself physical, Mary's learning about it may well be learning about something physical...Only if we've shown that Q_R is physical can Mary's textbooks teach her about it. It's question begging to build that assumption into our formulation of the knowledge argument" (2004: 195–6). The anti-materialist requires, Rosenthal argues, that Mary's textbook knowledge be exclusively physical, and if Q_R is non-physical, then Mary learns about something non-physical in her room and this

(3) Q is Q_R .¹⁷

On the other hand, Mary knows (3) in virtue of knowing that this (the experience type demonstrated by her and Marianna) is a red experience. That is, *what she knows but Marianna does not know is the following*:

(4) This is a red experience.

RS argues for two distinct claims: first, (4) is a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity; second, failing to recognize identities does not have ontological costs: just as Perry's failing to know, demonstrating Dretske that *that* is Dretske is merely a failure to recognize an identity and thus does not have any ontological implications, Marianna's failing to know (4) is failing to recognize an identity and thus does not have any ontological implications. RS holds that Marianna already knows a fact identical to the fact expressed by (4) in some other way (for instance, she knows that a red experience is a red experience) just as Perry knows a fact identical to the fact that that [demonstrating Dretske] is Dretske in some other way (for instance, he knows that Dretske is Dretske).¹⁸

obscures any new non-physical knowledge she might get on first consciously seeing red. I think this is a reasonable worry about Perry's formulation of the knowledge argument, and if, as Rosenthal suggests, Mary cannot learn about Q_R in her room, then Perry's thesis that Mary's new knowledge is knowledge of an identity does not even get off the ground. I grant in this paper that Mary can learn about Q_R in her room, and I will show that granting even this much does not save RS. See also Perry's (2004) response to Rosenthal.

¹⁷ It is worth making a point that supplements my discussion in the previous section of Chalmers' influential interpretation of RS. (3) captures what Mary comes to know after seeing paradigmatically red objects. Indeed, the content of (3) is one of Perry's candidates for the content of Mary's crucial new knowledge (see Perry (2001, chap. 7: 145–50)). If this is so, then RS cannot be viewed as an attempt to assimilate phenomenal knowledge to indexical knowledge given that there are no demonstrative concepts involved in (3).

¹⁸ One may wonder how Perry accounts for the cognitive significance of identities such as (3) and (4). Perry argues that in order to appreciate the cognitive significance of identities, one must reject "the subject matter assumption," according to which "the rational content of a belief is the conditions its truth puts on the subject matter of the belief, the objects the notions and concepts in the belief are of" (113–4). However, rejecting the subject matter assumption is, Perry argues, not rejecting the notion of content. In fact, for Perry, we need not jettison content but *discover more of it*, i.e., we need different kinds of truth-conditions (which he calls "reflexive truth-conditions") as a part of the rational content of a belief in order to account for the cognitive significance of beliefs about identities. Reflexive truth-conditions are, as Perry defines them, not merely conditions on the subject matter but "conditions on the utterances or thoughts *themselves*" (21). By appealing to reflexive contents, Perry tells us, we can capture differences in contents of beliefs that are not captured by holding the subject matter assumption. The merits of Perry's "reflexive-referential account of content" for the cognitive significance of identities need not be assessed in this paper because the piece of knowledge that is really problematic for physicalism is, as I will argue, not of an identity.

In order to argue against RS, one need not raise objections against the account it provides for the epistemic progress Mary makes when she gets the information in (4). This is because an attempt to understand Mary's *entire* epistemic progress in terms of acquiring a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity rests essentially on a failure to distinguish different pieces of knowledge Mary gains when she sees ripe tomatoes: the one that she shares with Marianna and the other one she has but Marianna lacks. The latter might be a bit of recognitional knowledge of an identity and hence be devoid of ontological implications; but, as I will now argue, the former is not recognition of an identity and hence that RS cannot account for the first epistemic stage.¹⁹

What are the conditions under which a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity is acquired? A natural suggestion is this. A condition for a given subject to acquire a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity is that she has (at least) two concepts of the same thing. The acquisition of recognitional knowledge of an identity occurs when the subject recognizes that there is only one thing, rather than two, her concepts are about. Perry acquires a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity upon his recognition that *this* (person) and Dretske are not two different things but one and the same thing. This is also what happens to Mary when, at the second epistemic stage, she recognizes that Q and Q_R are not two different things but one and the same thing.

Now does anything like Mary's recognition that there is only one thing, rather than two, her concepts are about occur at the first epistemic stage? I think the answer is definitely "No." Nothing like recognizing an identity occurs at the first epistemic stage because, at that stage, Mary does *not* recognize that Q is Q_R , and recognizing that Q is Q_R (what else?) is what Mary has to do if she is to be conceived as acquiring a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity.

One may reasonably raise the question of what sort of information Mary acquires at the first epistemic stage if it is not a piece of recognitional knowledge of an identity. I think the answer to this question is already implicit in the account given in the previous section. What Mary learns at the first epistemic stage is that the experience-type that is referred to by her demonstrative concept *this* has a certain quality, one which is referred to by her novel concept Q . There is no recognition of an identity here but recognition that the experience-type that is con-

¹⁹ Stalnaker also holds that there are indeed two different epistemic stages Mary goes through upon seeing a ripe tomato and raises doubts as to whether RS is properly applicable to the first epistemic stage. He writes: "It is at stage one that the problematic cognitive achievement—the learning "what it is like" to see red – takes place. But it is at stage two...that Mary receives information that *this* color is red, the information that is analogous to the information that Perry received, that *this* person is Dretske. So even if the analogy could help to explain what is learned at stage two, it is not clear that this would be relevant to the original puzzle." (2008: 44) However, Stalnaker does not go far enough to make a definite claim that RS *cannot* account for the first epistemic stage and hence leaves unanswered the question of *why* it cannot account for that stage.

ceived by Mary as the object of her demonstration has a certain quality, which is non-demonstratively conceived as Q . The piece of knowledge Mary shares with Marianna is recognitional because the concept Q is a recognitional concept, which she deploys to introspectively identify her red experiences, and also because correct applications of recognitional concepts yield recognitional knowledge. However, not all recognitions are recognitions of identities: some are recognitions of property-instantiations. And it is the latter type of recognition under which Mary's progress at the first epistemic stage falls.

Typically, perceptual experiences have many properties. A given perceptual experience might have, for instance, the property of being caused by red things under such and such circumstances, the property of being the favorite experience of most people located in such and such part of the world, the property of having such and such beliefs as effects, and so on. In addition to all these relational properties, the perceptual experience in question might have a specific subjective character, a qualitative feature in virtue of which there is something it is like to undergo that experience. The phenomenal concept Q involved in (P) is a concept of the qualitative feature of the experience of seeing red, a novel concept that Mary acquires through having that experience. Mary gains a special sort of access to the property picked out by Q in virtue of having the experience of seeing red, which is what explains its novelty.²⁰ Of course, a commitment to *special* access does not entail, without further argument, a commitment to *unique* access. More specifically, it does not entail without further argument that the property picked out by Q cannot be picked out by the concepts Mary acquires in her room. Indeed, the concept Q_R that Perry stipulates is had by Mary while she is still in her room is designed to pick out whatever Q picks out. However, as I have argued above, no recognition of the identity that Q is Q_R occurs at the first stage of Mary's entire epistemic progress, and no other identity seems relevant. The first epistemic stage is rather to be characterized by Mary's predicating the novel concept Q , which is of the qualitative feature of the experience of seeing red, of the experience she undergoes. If this is so, Mary's first-stage knowledge does not have the form 'x is y' but the form 'x is an F'.

A question in the vicinity that calls for an answer is this: how does my objection to RS bear on the prospects of the Phenomenal Concept Strategy (PCS) in general?²¹ As I see it, RS can be plausibly considered as a version of PCS since it subscribes to the central claim of PCS that there are some special, phenomenal concepts of experiences (or their subjective characters) the acquisition of which is not guaranteed by the acquisition of physical concepts. However, RS also makes the further

²⁰ Perry writes: "[T]here is a way of attending to a subjective character that is possible only when one is having an experience of which it is the subjective character" (2001: 145).

²¹ See fn. 11.

claim that the knowledge that characterizes Mary's entire epistemic progress is knowledge of an identity, something like 'Q is Q_R'. This is what distinguishes RS from other (and perhaps more popular) versions of PCS. This further claim about the form of the crucial new knowledge Mary acquires through experiencing is not essential to PCS. A non-RS version of PCS can consistently claim that the knowledge in question is of the form 'x is an F' while holding that concepts Q and Q_R pick out the same property. That is, such a version might hold that it is true that Q is Q_R without claiming that knowledge of this truth characterizes Mary's crucial new knowledge (or her entire epistemic progress). The objection that I develop against RS in this paper is not, and is not intended as, an objection to a non-RS version of PCS conceived along those lines.²²

To sum up the upshot of the paper: once the two epistemic stages one might undergo through experiencing red are clearly distinguished, it is easy to see that Mary's entire epistemic progress cannot be understood merely as coming to recognize an identity. Since the first stage of the entire epistemic progress in question involves a piece of propositional knowledge that is not knowledge of an identity, RS fails as a response to the knowledge argument.²³

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²² For an attack against non-RS versions of PCS, see Demircioglu (2012).

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